



*"I will pour out my Spirit upon all...*

*and your young shall see visions*

*and your old shall dream dreams."*

*--Acts 2:17*

# *Voices & Visions*

*A publication of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ*

Volume 2, Number 3

May/June 2000

## *Annual Meeting 2000*

*"... And what does God require of you ..."*

On June 16 and 17, the Southeast Conference will once again gather for our Annual Meeting. This year's theme, based on Micah 6:8, is "Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God."

We will be hosted by Community Congregational United Church of Christ and First Congregational Church in Montgomery. The meeting will be a time of renewal and celebration, as well as a time of equipping us for the work that God calls us to do.

We have scheduled substantial "extra-curricular" activities. On Friday, before the Annual Meeting begins, there will be a Civil Rights tour of Montgomery for adults (our youth will take a similar tour on Saturday as part of their program). We are also proposing a gathering of all TAP (Theology Among the People) participants, and exploring the possibility of gathering our clergy in specialized ministries and new church start pastors for times of renewal and reflection.

Throughout our worship and gathering times, we will be led in music by some of the most gifted musicians in the United Church of Christ, including Paul Sadler and Jeffrey Radford, the Minister of Music at Trinity UCC in Chicago, our denomination's largest congregation. Worship and music on Friday evening will be led by the UCC national staff for evangelism. At our Saturday worship, we will celebrate with a "Massed Choir," which will be led by Jeffrey Radford. We will welcome as our preacher the Rev. Dr. Bennie E. Whiten, Jr., Minister and President of the Massachusetts Conference.

On Saturday afternoon, a number of workshops will be offered, conducted by national staff, Conference staff, and our new church start pastors. These will emphasize different aspects of being strong and faithful congregations.

Participants in the Annual Meeting will find opportunities to explore resources on everything from effective Christian education to stewardship, from ways to protect your church building and your congregation from liability to effective evangelism and church renewal. A wonderful program for youth is also being planned.

The Annual Meeting of the Conference is not simply a gathering of clergy and delegates. It is a gathering for your whole church family. It promises to be a time of inspiration and renewal, a time of "equipping the saints" for the work of God, and a time for us to celebrate the many joyful new beginnings that mark our life as a Conference. We hope to see you there!

### *Inviting All Youth!*

Over the last three years, the youth presence at the Annual Meeting of the Conference has been steadily growing. This year's program has a special emphasis on the theme "Celebrating Diversity." Youth activities will include a Civil Rights tour of Montgomery and workshops on diversity and differences. All youth are invited! We encourage every congregation with an active youth program to bring a large delegation to be part of the conversations, discoveries, and celebrations that will make a memorable experience for all.

## *Saturday Workshops*

On Saturday afternoon we will have two sessions of workshops, one beginning at 1:45 and the second beginning at 3:15. The workshops that we have confirmed at this point are:

- ♦ **Act Your Size:** Understanding your congregation's behavior according to the size of your membership. **John Mingus**
- ♦ **Bringing Worship and Music Alive in Your Congregation.** **Paul Sadler**
- ♦ **Rekindling the Gift:** Learn the history of our congregations founded by the American Missionary Association and our hopes for a transformative future. **Joyce Hollyday**
- ♦ **Restructuring of the United Church of Christ and its Implications for Conferences and Congregations.** **Tim Downs**
- ♦ **The TAP (Theology Among the People) Program:** Doing theology at the grass roots. **Dick Sales**
- ♦ **Building a New Congregation:** A case study on the formation of Community Congregational Church, UCC, Montgomery. **Bennie Liggins and lay leaders**
- ♦ **Protecting Your Church Building and Your Congregation from Risk and Liability.** **Mark Slater, United Church Insurance Boards**
- ♦ **Effective Stewardship:** How to bring giving alive in your congregation. **Facilitator to be announced**
- ♦ **The Ways of Knowing God:** How we learn and how that influences how we teach Christian education. **K. Ray Hill**

We are working on additional workshops. Sign-ups for the workshops will take place at registration.

## *A New Approach to Presenting Concerns around Social Issues*

The Board of Directors of the Conference, after careful deliberation, has determined that more effective ways exist for people who have concerns around particular social justice issues to present those issues than through the traditional resolutions process. **We wish to encourage people who want to present issues to sign up for display space, to volunteer to do workshops on the issues around which they have concerns, to take advantage of the speak-outs that will be interspersed throughout our business meeting on Saturday morning, and to feel free to circulate petitions for people to sign.** The Board feels that these actions constitute a more thoughtful and effective approach to making faithful witness on social justice issues.

If there are issues about which you have concerns, please register as soon as possible for display space in the display area or to conduct a workshop.

# IMPORTANT ANNUAL MEETING NOTES

## *Remember the Memorial Service*

Over the years, one of the special moments of the Annual Meeting is a time when congregations come forward to read the names of those of their members who have died in the previous year. We encourage all of you to come prepared to participate in that memorial service, which will take place on Saturday evening, **June 17**, after dinner. Each congregation should have a designated representative to read the names of its saints who have passed on.

## *Registering for Display Space & Workshop Opportunities*

While the facilities at Community Congregational Church are substantial—and we have no doubt are sufficient for our needs—display space and rooms available for workshops will be limited. If there is a particular issue of social justice around which you wish to do some education, and you would like space in the display area and/or during the workshop time, please remember that registration for those spaces will be on a first come, first served basis.

## *Are You a UCC Minister in a Specialized Ministry?*

At the November retreat for specialized ministers (chaplains, teachers, activists, and others serving in settings other than the local church), the idea was proposed that we gather again at the Annual Meeting. If you are a specialized minister and would like to be part of such a gathering (before or after the meeting, or over a meal on Saturday), please let Joyce Hollyday know of your interest and preferred time of meeting **by May 15**. Phone: 800-442-1064; e-mail: [jhollyday@citcom.net](mailto:jhollyday@citcom.net).

## *Are You Interested in a Time for Spiritual Renewal and Prayer before Annual Meeting?*

James Schwarzlose, pastor of Jones Chapel United Church of Christ in Woodbury, Georgia, has expressed an interest in gathering people for a time of prayer and spiritual renewal prior to the Annual Meeting on **Friday, June 16**. If you have an interest in such a gathering, please contact the Conference office at 800-807-1993 and speak with Gerri Ryons-Hudson **by June 1**.

## *To Give and to Receive: It's All Good*

The Southeast Conference Resource Center is sponsoring a book, curriculum, and other resources exchange at the Annual Meeting this June. We will have a table where you may bring your extra curriculum copies, old beloved books, and other resources that you no longer need. Or you may drop by and freely partake of the offerings at this table. Some of us have shelves and closets stuffed with useful resources that are collecting dust. Others of us have lost a favorite resource or need a few more items on our shelves. Either way, this exchange table aims to move stuff around and keep the dust from settling.



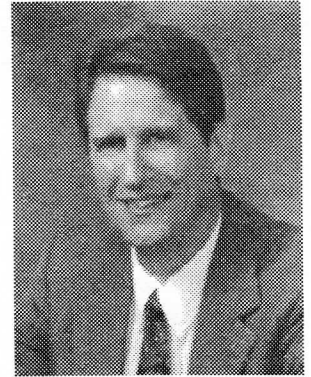
# National Staff Participants

We will be welcoming the following national staff at our Annual Meeting.



**Rev. Melbalenia D. Evans**, who was our preacher at our last Annual Meeting, is a minister of considerable accomplishments, including being a presenter at many convocations and retreats, and a contributor to numerous publications. A graduate of Howard University School of Divinity, Melbalenia has worked for the Board for Homeland Ministries since 1992. She began a new ministry in April of this year when she was called to serve on the staff of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago.

We welcome back **Rev. Stephen A. Gifford**, who was born and raised in Youngstown, Ohio. He graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary. He has served ministries in six congregations, including St. Thomas United Church of Christ in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Steve has served with the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries in the area of Evangelism since 1992. He has recently been called to serve as pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ in Waterloo, Illinois, a position he will assume after June 2000 when he completes his work with the Board for Homeland Ministries. St. Paul is a church of more than 1,300 members.



**Rev. Danny Roman-Gloro**, Minister of Evangelism for Hispanic Church Development with the Board for Homeland Ministries, is a graduate of Eden Theological Seminary. Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Danny moved to the United States in 1983. He has served in two congregations in the Florida Conference and is pastor of the Primera Iglesia Hispana Unida de Cristo, in Chicago, Illinois.

**Rev. Paul H. Sadler, Sr.**, who is no stranger to the Southeast Conference, was born in Philadelphia. He graduated from the Howard University Divinity School and has served congregations in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Illinois, and New Orleans, Louisiana. His ministries include a three-year tenure as Associate Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ, the largest congregation in the denomination. Paul currently serves as Minister of Evangelism for African American and Native American Indian Church Development at the Board for Homeland Ministries. He has published numerous articles and contributed to several books, and he is the author of *Walk in the Light: Insight and Reflections on Living the Christian Life*.



## Special Guest



**The Rev. Dr. Bennie E. Whiten, Jr.**, has served as Minister and President of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ since 1991. In July 2000 he retires from ministry and returns to his home in Michigan. Born in Louisiana and raised in Texas, Rev. Whiten graduated from the Howard University School of Religion. He was ordained in 1957 into the United Church of Christ, beginning his ministry in Cincinnati, Ohio. Since that time he has had ministries in New York and Chicago, and has served as an adjunct faculty member at Chicago Theological Seminary, McCormick Theological Seminary, and the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education. While in Massachusetts, he has served on the Board of Trustees of Andover Newton Theological Seminary and in a number of ecumenical settings of the church, as well as on the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ, the Board of Directors of the Cornerstone Fund, and the Board of Directors of the United Church Insurance Boards. He has over the course of his ministry left an indelible mark on the life of the United Church of Christ, being a persistent voice for justice and reconciliation in the life of our denomination.

## *Schedule of Events*

### Friday, June 16

<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>3:00 PM</b>	Meeting of TAP Program Participants
<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>2:00 PM</b>	Meeting of New Church Start Pastors
<b>3:30</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>5:45 PM</b>	Meeting of Ministers Serving in Specialized Ministries ( <b>tentatively scheduled</b> )
<b>6:00</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>10:00 PM</b>	Registration
<b>6:00</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	Dinner
<b>7:30</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>9:00 PM</b>	Opening Convocation Gathering Music Welcome Opening Worship & Celebration led by <b>Rev. Steve Gifford, Rev. Melbalenia Evans, &amp; Rev. Paul Sadler</b>
		<b>9:15 PM</b>	Fellowship & Refreshments

### Saturday, June 17

<b>9:00</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>9:30 AM</b>	Opening Worship & Music
<b>9:30</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>12 Noon</b>	Business meeting
		<b>10:30 AM</b>	Music Break
		<b>12 Noon</b>	Time to Celebrate
<b>12:30</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>1:30 PM</b>	Lunch
<b>1:45</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>3:00 PM</b>	Workshop Session I
<b>3:15</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>4:30 PM</b>	Workshop Session II
<b>5:30</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	Dinner Recognition of Ordination Anniversaries Recognition of TAP Program Participants Other Recognitions
		<b>7:15 PM</b>	Music Gathering
		<b>7:30 PM</b>	Service of Remembrance
		<b>7:45 PM</b>	Service of Celebration Sermon - <b>The Rev. Dr. Bennie Whiten</b>

### Sunday, June 18

While the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference concludes with Saturday evening's celebration, all are invited to stay for the celebration of the 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Community Congregational United Church of Christ. The preacher for the occasion will be **The Rev. Dr. Bennie Whiten**. The service will mark the transition of Community Congregational from being a new church start to being an established church.

### *A Gathering of New Church Start Pastors*

On **Friday morning, June 16**, the new church start pastors in the Southeast Conference will gather for a time of reflection and sharing of resources.

### *Tour the Allen Retreat Center*

Stop and tour the Retreat Center on your way to Montgomery **Friday, June 16**. Committee members will be available to conduct tours. Call the Conference office **(800-807-1993)** for directions and times tours will be held.

## IMPORTANT ANNUAL MEETING EARLY REGISTRATION INFORMATION

If your registration form is postmarked by **May 19th** it will be entered into a drawing for a **\$100 gift certificate** from **Cokesbury Bookstore**. Conference **staff members** and **Board of Directors** are not eligible for the drawing. **All registrations are due by May 29th.**

## HOTEL INFORMATION

Following is a list of hotels to be used during the Annual Meeting. When making reservations please indicate that you are with the United Church of Christ-Southeast Conference to receive the rates listed. Also note the reservation cut-off dates for each hotel. An additional 10% local and state tax will be accessed to your room cost.

**Courtyard-Mariott - 5555 Carmichael Road (1-800-321-2211) - Single \$69/Double \$79 - Cut-off: May 7, 2000**

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**Fairfield-Mariott - 5601 Carmichael Road (334-270-0007) - Single/Double \$47 - Cut-off: May 26, 2000**

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Spring Hill Suites-Mariott - 5041 Carmichael Road (334-409-9999) - Single/Double \$67.50 - Cut-off: June 2, 2000**

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Hampton Inn - 1401 Eastern Boulevard (334-277-2400) - Single/Double \$66 - Confirmation number: 82307366 - Cut-off: May 16, 2000**

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Holiday Inn - 1185 Eastern Boulevard (334-272-0370) - Single/Double \$66.95 - Cut-off: June 2, 2000**

## DIRECTIONS TO COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

**FROM I-85 South - Take I-85 South to Union Street-Exit #1. Turn Left onto Court Street. Turn Left onto Edgemont Avenue. Church is on the corner of Court Street & Edgemont Avenue, directly across from Bellingrath Junior High School.**

\*\*\*\*\*  
**FROM I-65 North - Take I-65 North to I-85 North. Take I-85 North to Court Street Exit. Turn Rightt onto Court Street to Edgemont. Church is on the corner of Court & Edgemont Streets, directly across from Bellingrath Junior High School.**

\*\*\*\*\*  
**FROM I-65 South - Take I-65 South to Edgemont Avenue-Exit #169. Merge onto Edgemont Avenue East to Court Street. Church is on the corner of Court & Edgemont Streets, directly across from Bellingrath Junior High School.**

## ALL ANNUAL MEETING ATTENDEES

An Annual Meeting packet will be mailed to all local church pastors/moderators. It will include a letter of call, registration forms, lodging information, Civil Rights tour registration forms, display table reservation forms, and consent forms for the youth program. Please contact your pastor or the Southeast Conference Office (1-800-807-1993; e-mail [ghudson@secucc.org](mailto:ghudson@secucc.org)) for any additional information or forms that you may need.



**ADULT CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR OF MONTGOMERY - FRIDAY, JUNE 16**

**1:00 TO 4:00 PM - Cost- \$10**

(Bus will leave from & return to Community Congregational Church)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ day \_\_\_\_\_ evening

Return this form with your check to the Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ,  
756 West Peachtree Street, NW, Atlanta, GA 30308-1138 - no later than May 29th.

If we do not have 45 passengers to fill the bus, the tour will be cancelled, and your  
check returned.

**ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

Registration for the entire meeting includes all materials, workshops, and meals Friday dinner  
through Saturday dinner.

\$55 for Adults      \$50 for Youth (12-18 yrs.)      \$30 for children (3 -11 yrs.)  
\$45 for Saturday only      \$30 for Friday only

Childcare will be available at a cost of \$5 from 9:15 AM - 4:45 PM  
and 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM on Saturday.

**Register Early (by May 19th) and become eligible to win a \$100 gift certificate to  
Cokesbury Book Store. All registrations are due by May 29th.**

**Please print clearly**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ day \_\_\_\_\_ evening

**Church (city & name):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendee Type: Check One**

\_\_\_\_\_ Adult    \_\_\_\_\_ Youth    \_\_\_\_\_ Child    \_\_\_\_\_ Friday only    \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday only

**Category Type: Check one** \_\_\_\_\_ Delegate    \_\_\_\_\_ Clergy    \_\_\_\_\_ Visitor    \_\_\_\_\_ Board Member

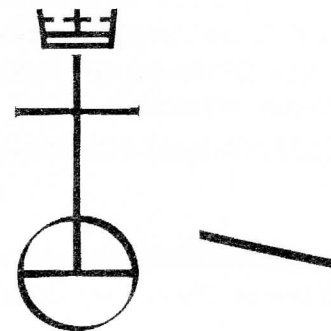
Checks should be made payable to: Southeast Conference (indicate Annual Meeting). Mail  
registration & checks to: Southeast Conference, UCC, 756 West Peachtree Street, NW, Atlanta,  
GA 30308.

**PLEASE DETACH & RETURN THIS FORM BY: MAY 19th for Early Registration**

**Special Edition**

*"Do justice ...  
Love kindness ...  
Walk humbly with God."*

*Southeast Conference  
United Church of Christ  
Annual Meeting  
June 16-17, 2000*



*Community Congregational UCC  
Montgomery, Alabama*

*Southeast Conference of the  
United Church of Christ  
756 W Peachtree Street, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30308-1138*

